

APPLICANT(S): KRAUSZ, Eliezer et al.
SERIAL NO.: 10/718,813
FILED: November 24, 2003
Page 4

REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-4 and 6-8 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-4 and 6-8 have been rejected.

Claim 1 has been amended.

Claim 6 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims add no new matter.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Morris (US 4,889,167). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the remarks that follow.

With respect to Claim 1, as amended, The Examiner has stated that "Morris discloses in a pipe clamp 10 for pipe repair, the improvement being the provisions of a reinforcing material 23a bonded to flexible inner sleeve 18 or embedded therein to inhibit axial expansion thereof when the inner sleeve is under compression ...". Applicants respectfully

APPLICANT(S): KRAUSZ, Eliezer et al.
SERIAL NO.: 10/718,813
FILED: November 24, 2003
Page 5

disagree. Morris discloses "The material for the outer layer of the tensile component is comprised of a scrim or weave 23a of fibers or cord encased or sandwiched, as shown in FIG. 5 ..." Col. 3, lines 12-14. Fig. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 5--5 of FIG. 2. Thus, it is clear from Fig. 5, when taken in conjunction with Fig. 2, that "scrim or weave 23a" may provide reinforcement force which may merely inhibit circumferential expansion, as opposed to "to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve" recited in amended claim 1. Accordingly, Morris fails to disclose or suggest "comprising a reinforcing material coaxial with said pipe clamp or coupling associated with said flexible inner sleeve to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve when said inner sleeve is under compression" as recited in amended claim 1. The Examiner has further stated that Morris discloses "wherein the flexible inner sleeve is provided with flexible sealing lips (square protrusions created by indentations 22, see col. 2, lines 62-66)". Applicants respectfully disagree. Morris discloses "The surface of the elastomeric component facing the pipe is preferably molded with a large plurality of shallow depressions 22 arranged in a waffle pattern as shown in FIG. 4 for increasing the gasket's barrier to fluid leakage", where "plurality of shallow depressions 22" correspond to "array of depressions" as recited in amended claim 1. Morris does not teach or suggest "sealing lips protruding from said inner face and integral to said flexible inner sleeve on its inner face to contact said pipes, said inner lips are made to form circumferential sealing ring around said pipes" as recited in amended independent claim 1. For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach all elements of the claim. Therefore, Morris cannot anticipate claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2-4, 7 and 8, depends from claim 1, and therefore includes all the limitations of this claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 2-4, 7 and 8 are likewise allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to amended independent claim 1 and to claims 2-4, 7 and 8 dependent thereon.

Claims 6 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

APPLICANT(S): KRAUSZ, Eliezer et al.
SERIAL NO.: 10/718,813
FILED: November 24, 2003
Page 6

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Schmidt (US 6,070,914). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the remarks that follow.

Claim 1 recites "a reinforcing material coaxial with said pipe clamp or coupling associated with said flexible inner sleeve to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve when said inner sleeve is under compression between said pipes and said clamping band". Schmidt does not disclose, teach or suggest "a reinforcing material coaxial with said pipe clamp or coupling associated with said flexible inner sleeve to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve when said inner sleeve is under compression between said pipes and said clamping band". It is clear from the Figures that "outer ring part 13a" may provide reinforcement force which may merely inhibit circumferential expansion, as opposed to "to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve" recited in amended claim 1. For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach all elements of the claim. Therefore, Schmidt cannot anticipate claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 3-4 and 8, depends from claim 1, and therefore includes all the limitations of this claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 3-4 and 8 are likewise allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to amended independent claim 1 and to claims 3-4 and 8 dependent thereon.

Claims 6 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Schmidt.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 2 under Schmidt.

APPLICANT(S): KRAUSZ, Eliezer et al.
SERIAL NO.: 10/718,813
FILED: November 24, 2003
Page 7

Claim 1 is allowable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claim 2 depends from claim 1, and therefore includes all the limitations of this claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 2 is likewise allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claim 2.

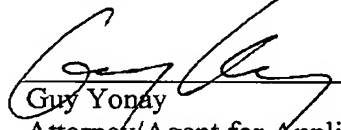
APPLICANT(S): KRAUSZ, Eliezer et al.
SERIAL NO.: 10/718,813
FILED: November 24, 2003
Page 8

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the pending claims are deemed to be allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

Please charge any fees associated with this paper to deposit account No. 50-3355.

Respectfully submitted,



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